

Sussex Correctional Institution (SCI)

Security Audit Final Report

Submitted to Commissioner Carl Danberg on

11/19/2012

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Purpose of Security Audit

This audit was directed by Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) Commissioner Carl Danberg for the purpose of determining the extent to which good correctional policy is in place and the extent to which those policies are followed. Recommendations are also provided to enhance facility operations.

Security Audit Team

The Audit Team was comprised of 10 individuals including Chairman David Pierce who currently serves as Deputy Warden at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in Smyrna and Co-chair Phil Parker who currently serves as Security Superintendent at the Howard R. Young Correctional Institution in Wilmington. Two consultants were brought in to assist including Theresa Lantz who is a nationally recognized expert in corrections and a retired Commissioner of Corrections in Connecticut, as well as Melanie C. Pereira, Esquire; who is a former Deputy Commissioner of Correction in Maryland and the retired Director of the Howard County, Maryland Department of Correction. The final six Audit Team members was composed of six DOC professionals (supervisors and front line staff) representing various DOC facilities in New Castle County (DE) all of whom have training and experience with the National Institute of Corrections Security Audit Program. Members are listed below in alphabetical order:

Angelo D’Aniello

Brian Emig

Lynn Gibson

Theresa Lantz

Eric Lehman

Jamie Nieves

Phil Parker

Melanie Pereira

David Pierce

Richard Soulette

Methodology and Activities

Warden Johnson and his leadership team's contributions were critical to the success of this audit and it should be noted that this audit would not have been possible to complete without the assistance of the facility leadership. It was clear to everyone involved that we entered this process with the common understanding that a fresh perspective on operations is likely to generate some recommendations for positive change within their facility. With this goal in mind, there was a spirit of cooperation and transparency which helped facilitate a comprehensive review of all aspects of the facility.

During the course of the audit, several meetings were held with the Warden and his staff to gain a better understanding of the institution and help orient the various Audit Team members to the facility. SCI policies and procedures were reviewed to determine if the policy in place was appropriate. Audit Team members conducted observations on all shifts on weekdays and weekends during which they observed how staff conducted the operation in light of the existing policy. In addition, several NIC Security Audit Tools were employed to review specific areas such as:

Armory	Inmate Transportation
Communications	Inmate visiting
Control Centers	Inmate Counts
Controlled Movements	Inmate Property
Use of Force	Inmate Work Assignments
Hazardous Materials Management	Searches
Key Control	Security Inspections
Perimeter Security	Physical Plant
Post Orders	Tool and Sensitive Item Control
Segregation (Special Management)	Emergency Plans

Uniform and non-uniform staff members were helpful by providing input during the audit process. Focus groups were conducted with a random sampling of supervisors, front line staff, and inmates to gain insight from the people who live and work in the facility every day. System tests were conducted to simulate emergency situations and create opportunities to observe specific policies being applied to unique situations. Video recordings of security cameras were reviewed during routine and emergency situations. Various statistical data and records were reviewed as a part of this process. This project involved a combined dedication of approximately 600 hours of work to complete.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Sussex Correctional Institution (SCI) security audit was to determine the extent to which good correctional policy is in place and the extent to which those policies are followed. SCI is a safe, secure, and sanitary correctional facility with experienced staff and respected leadership. Nevertheless, the existing policies are inadequate to properly guide the myriad of institutional operations. There are less than 30 institutional policies in place at SCI and they fail to cover the scope and detail of the 70+ BOP policies or the 200+ DOC policies that govern the facility. To fill the policy void, staff use a combination of historical practices, memorandum, and verbal communication of operational changes to guide the daily operations.

The staff of the facility are experienced and generally know what to do without reference to policy; however, without specific policy there is a wide range of opinion regarding what is expected. The Audit Team discovered that good policy is not in place to the extent required and much of the existing policy does not reflect higher level policy changes or changes to institutional operation. Absent good policy in place to measure compliance, the NIC Security Audit Tools were used to measure the extent to which operational standards are being maintained. All NIC Security Audit subjects listed on page #4 of this report were found in substantial compliance.

Staff perform the basic operations of an adult correctional facility in compliance with standards without much in writing to guide them. The experience of the staff combined with the fact they seldom change assignments keeps the facility running without the need for detailed written instructions. Historically and operationally this works for SCI but does not meet the national standard or the standards outlined in DOC/BOP policy. Developing detailed policy and procedure and establishing a formal process to self-evaluate the extent to which measurable objectives are being met will set the foundation for the leadership to use for informed decision making in the future.

Facility culture requires significant attention at SCI. The facility takes pride in the cooperative spirit at work within the facility and many describe the facility culture as being “laid back” and informal. The culture needs to grow to include detailed expectations of procedural compliance and performance measurement. Staff of all ranks communicate well with each other but many important communications come from unscheduled informal interaction. Key facility managers should regularly meet to coordinate efforts and communicate concerns and or changes regarding operations. The current culture has created a climate where important information is sometimes not formally reported and available for the leadership to review and use in decision making. Problems are often only reported to higher authority if the problem

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could not be resolved at the lower level. Lack of good policy combined with the culture of handling as much as possible at the lowest level creates an environment that is adverse to change and difficult to supervise. The leadership of SCI is aware of the importance of culture and has set goals for improvement. There is extensive information available through the National Institute of Corrections (www.nicic.gov/culture) that can assist the facility to assess the staff culture and develop strategies to implement change in support of the agency mission. Key facility staff would benefit from touring similar facilities in other states to share best practices with other professionals in the field of corrections. The leadership of the facility should participate in training regarding leadership and culture to assist them in the realization of the goals they have set for improvement. “Management by Walking Around” (MBWA) is a great opportunity for the leadership to establish a shared vision and set high levels of expectations for performance while increasing communication at all levels.

The Audit Team has made several recommendations which we believe would enhance the operations at SCI. The facility leadership has been verbally briefed on our findings and has been very supportive of the Audit Teams work and is committed to doing what it takes to improve where needed. Many of the observations and recommendations made within this report are shared by the facility leadership as well as the Audit Team. Some of the recommendations would require budgetary support to accomplish such as physical plant improvements, training, and programs for inmates. The Audit Team recognizes the difficulty in financing the recommendations and attempted to limit those items to the ones we viewed as most essential for accomplishing the agency mission.

Facility Assessment and Recommendations

This report contains information from various team members involved in the audit and there may be some noticeable differences in the style of each contributing member. The final report was generated through the combined input from all ten team members; however, it should be noted that in any group task there is seldom total agreement on every item. In the interest of time, this final report is an attempt to set forth the information most relevant to the purpose of the audit and will not detail every item reviewed by the Audit Team.

Based on all activities associated with the Security Audit, the Audit Team offers the following reflections and recommendations to enhance best practices at the facility. These are grouped below in 8 categories and identify within each category *Strengths, Challenges, and Recommendations* for consideration. The 8 categories will include:

- Physical Plant
- Leadership
- Facility Climate and Culture
- Policy and Procedure
- Emergency Preparedness
- Inmate Supervision and Management
- Staffing
- Training

Physical Plant

- Strengths:
 - The perimeter of the facility as well as several of the interior buildings were constructed within the last two decades and are in relatively good condition.
 - The recent construction included appropriate space for additional detention population, a state of the art booking and receiving area, and additional program space such as the Boot Camp, Key South, and Merit buildings.
- Challenges:
 - The facility housing units include some construction that dates from 1931 to some recently constructed making it difficult to maintain the older units to modern standards.

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- Inmates are housed in cells and dormitories some of which are being operated at double their design capacities.
 - While the newer construction was built on the “direct supervision” model with correctional staff always present in the housing area, the older units were all designed on the “remote supervision” model with staff making regular checks in the inmate housing areas.
 - The facility does not have cameras in all areas and where cameras exist there is a need to update the equipment. Not all existing cameras are linked together to a single resource for monitoring and recording of the video.
 - Perimeter of the facility includes direct [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
 - Firearm distribution is [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
 - Vehicle movement, such as outside vendor deliveries to the kitchen [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
 - Multiple construction projects are currently underway to include NORESKO lighting and water conservation activity, roof replacement/repair, and natural gas installation. This has resulted in increased perimeter access and additional staff have been required to supervise the construction activity in multiple locations.
 - Some locations including offices and storage rooms have been repurposed and are not designed for their current use.
 - Staff laundry [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
- Recommendations:
 - Consider replacement of older “remote supervision” housing units that are aging and staff intensive to operate with units designed for the current population needs. Despite the initial cost of demolition and replacement construction, the reduction in staff achieved through modern design and “direct supervision” models offset the cost over time.

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- A strategic plan for expansion of the camera monitoring of the facility should be considered with a goal of placing cameras in each housing area and other key points of the facility. Such a plan should include the capacity to record a minimum of 30 days and have all cameras networked together on a common platform.
- Create a barrier [REDACTED].
- Identify alternate location to maintain and distribute [REDACTED] public access.
- Inspect the facility for repurposed areas to ensure they are appropriate for the current use and appropriate modifications and safety precautions are made as needed. Specific attention should be paid to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] staff response in an emergency.
- Examine the possibility of creating new space or using existing space outside of the facility to use as a receiving warehouse to prevent deliveries inside the secure perimeter [REDACTED]. Such would allow deliveries to be accepted as they arrive and then be brought into the facility [REDACTED].

Leadership

- Strengths:
 - The executive leadership of SCI has extensive experience at various ranks within the facility they now lead and they have earned respect and credibility among the staff of the facility. While change is difficult, the leadership in place has the ability to manage change with staff cooperation. They are clearly committed to making the facility the best it can be and are willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish that goal.
 - The executive leadership at SCI is valued by staff. In discussion with staff, they speak highly of the Warden and his commitment and accessibility.
 - There is a high degree of experience in the DOC by the executive and supervisory staff, and a high level of trust and support among facility staff for the leadership team.

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- Staff managers and supervisors feel they work well together and collaborate on shared issues or concerns.
- Line staff state they have easy access to supervisors and that supervisors are responsive for assistance and guidance as needed.
- Challenges:
 - There is no formal and clearly defined mission, vision, or values for the facility.
 - The facility does not have the depth of written policies and procedures in place to address and guide the myriad of operational and program activities specific to SCI. (See Policies and Procedures section in this report.)
 - The facility does not have a clear strategic plan which makes it difficult to concentrate on leadership efforts towards proactive measures rather than reactive management.
- Recommendations:
 - Key facility staff would benefit from touring similar facilities in other states. Observing how other systems manage facilities will offer ideas, suggestions, and strategies to consider for implementation at SCI.
 - The facility executive team should consider initiating a process with staff to develop a facility mission, vision, and identify the shared values that illustrate the guiding principles of SCI operations.
 - The facility executive team would benefit from initiating a strategic planning process with staff to develop short term and long term goals. Ongoing monitoring and adjustment of those goals will be essential to ensure effective change management, goal achievement and sustainability.
 - The facility executive team should explore opportunities to participate in leadership development programs and provide opportunities for future leaders in the organization to prepare for advancement.

Facility Climate and Culture

- Strengths:
 - The facility staff demonstrates pride in their workplace. The sanitation and presentation of the facility is positive and reflects favorably on the staff and the DOC.
 - There is good order and a general sense of calm in the facility.
 - Staff presents themselves as professional. Inmates were respectful, polite and responsive to questions from the Audit Team.
- Challenges:
 - The staff refers to themselves and the facility as “laid back”. A general mindset observed among many staff is that ‘this is the way we’ve always done it and its good enough’; however, in corrections this general culture often leads to complacency (see Staffing section in this report).
 - Staff and inmates report that when possible problems are handled informally and there is a general desire from everyone to handle things “in-house”. While this contributes to an overall environment of cooperation and common interest, it also provides a mechanism where information is sometimes not formally reported and available to supervisors or facility leadership.
 - Inmates reported that a large number of staff fail to communicate to them with a sense of respect. They also feel that staff are far too quick to resort to the use of force (specifically capstun) when dealing with any difficult situation. In general there was a sense of safety and cooperation among the inmate population.
 - Staff indicate that staff performance appraisals are merely a formality and that they are not in-depth or of value.
- Recommendations:
 - A healthy culture is critical to meeting the goals of facility safety and security. It is vital for facility leadership to recognize and influence facility culture as a component of the overall management of the operations.
 - Establish a clear expectation of reporting all unusual information from staff and inmates regardless if informal resolution was achieved.

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- Attention should be given to reduce staff behaviors that may negatively affect the culture, and reinforce the behaviors that lead to an effective management climate such as interpersonal communications.
- Staff performance appraisals should occur at least annually. The goal is to have the staff perceive them as having value and integrity. Performance expectations of staff need to be defined in policies, procedures, post orders, training, and supervision contacts. Recognizing staff (both publicly and privately) for high performance is effective at reinforcing work standards and practices.
- Revise and replace the current uniformed and non-uniformed dress code to reinforce a professional atmosphere and enhance the safety of the staff working inside the facility.
- There is extensive information available through the National Institute of Corrections (www.nicic.gov/culture) that can assist the facility to assess the staff culture and develop strategies to implement change in support of the agency mission.

Policy and Procedure

- Strengths:
 - Policies and procedures are available on the computer and by hard copy on each post. Staff understands how and demonstrated the ability to access them either digitally or by hard copy.
 - Staff is knowledgeable of the policy that is in place and most were able to explain what is expected without needing to refer to policy.
- Challenges:
 - The policy in place is limited in scope and fails to cover multiple aspects of the operation at SCI. Staff use a combination of policy, historical practices, memorandum, and verbal communication of changes which make it difficult to ensure consistency in some operations.
 - Many of the policies in place including post orders are outdated and have not been updated to reflect operational changes. For example, the dress code does not include recent changes in staff uniforms.

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- Facility policy is organized differently than Department of Correction and Bureau of Prisons policies which makes it difficult to identify which facility policies need to be reviewed when higher level policy changes are made.
- There are separate policies in use at the Boot Camp which are not consistent with facility policy and are not approved by the Warden of the facility.
- Recommendations:
 - Create a workgroup to review and update current policy, develop appropriate policy where none exists, and realign the facility policy manual to the Bureau of Prisons policy.
 - Establish an annual review of all policy and procedure to ensure they are current and reflect operational changes as needed.
 - Establish a method to regularly and systematically communicate changes to policy and procedure and maintain the record of that communication as well as historical copies of the policy which was replaced for possible future reference.
 - Consider including a schedule of routine activity for each post as a guide to staff who are unfamiliar with the operations in that area.
 - SCI Warden should review and approve any policy or procedure in effect at the facility to include those currently in use at Boot Camp.

Emergency Preparedness

- Strengths:
 - The facility has Emergency Preparedness (EP) manuals available to approved staff and located in designated secure areas.
 - Staff participates in several emergency drills each month and these drills are documented and reviewed through the chain of command.
 - Staff is knowledgeable regarding their role in an emergency situation and can be counted on to react appropriately to isolate and contain any emergency situation.
 - The record of staff inside the facility allows for quick access to a list of who is inside the facility in an emergency.

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- Challenges:
 - The detailed nature of the EP manuals requires frequent updates to include changes in contact information of both internal and external resources that may be needed in an emergency.
 - To comply with the required large scale EP practice sessions including outside agencies routine institutional operations must be delayed or cancelled, and it often increases overtime cost.
 - Established command center and alternate command center locations are effective; however, given the infrequency of emergencies they are seldom used for a real situation and staff may become unfamiliar with the tools available in an emergency.
- Recommendations:
 - In addition to the existing EP manuals the facility should consider development of specific written procedures for the most reasonably likely to happen emergency events, the events covered in specific EP checklists, and those required by DOC policy 9.25.
 - Complete the work already begun on a facility wide tactical survey to include [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
 - Review and audit the EP manuals annually and establish a review system for the Warden and other appropriate senior managers to participate in and document the review process.
 - Ensure that regular updates are made by someone assigned to maintain the EP manuals as changes occur between the annual audits.
 - Examine the drills being conducted to ensure that the training is broad enough to incorporate the use of the EP manuals on a large scale to include outside agencies when appropriate and document the activity.
 - Review technology and equipment available at the established command centers to ensure the commander has access to proper communications, facility information, and other resources which would be helpful in an emergency and

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use this equipment during drills to familiarize would be commanders with the items available.

- Develop a system for [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Training

- Strengths:
 - The executive leadership of SCI actively supports training for staff.
 - SCI conducts regular drills on each shift in each area to keep the staff prepared for the variety of situations they might face. Those drills are well documented and reviewed by facility leadership.
 - In addition to training offered by the DOC Employee Development Center, SCI also conducts in-house training for newly assigned and existing staff.
- Challenges:
 - The yearly training for staff is below the standard 40 hour annual recommended amount.
 - As with other facilities throughout the Department relieving those staff who are interested in self improvement to attend various training opportunities is difficult.
 - The use of force training details what types of force can be applied to different situations and relies heavily on the Use of Force Model (DOC policy 8.30 attachment); however, there is insufficient training given regarding the decision making and attempts to deescalate situations as alternatives to the use of force.
- Recommendations:
 - Explore opportunities through in-house or other methods to achieve the standard of 40 hours of training for each employee annually.
 - Consider implementation of a DOC specific training and development program for entry level supervisors and other middle management and formalize that program as a requirement for future advancement.

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- Evaluate all training programs to ensure that they are in compliance with established policy and expand the training program to include practical examples involving decision making when dealing with the inmate population. Role play of scenarios during training, and video examples of non-compliant and/or physically resistant inmates may be useful to help facilitate the discussion on complex issues such as the use of force.

Inmate Supervision and Management

- Strengths:
 - SCI leadership actively supports inmate programs and activities and is working to expand those opportunities as evidenced by the recent partnership with the Delaware SPCA's Paws for a Cause program.
 - The facility offers many different inmate programs and services including education, two substance abuse therapeutic community programs (GreenTree and Key South), masonry, religious, recreation, and Boot Camp programs to name a few.
 - Classification and the incorporation of the multi-disciplinary team are effective. Inmate risk and needs are assessed and used to inform classification decisions. The staff feels that they meet the agency/facility requirements and collaboration is valued.
 - The direct supervision units which represent a large portion of the housing areas are helpful in managing the inmate population as all housing unit activity is monitored by staff at all times.
- Challenges:
 - There is no Inmate Handbook or structured inmate orientation to the facility that guides the programs, services, activities and performance/behavioral expectations of the inmates.
 - The inmate population expressed concern regarding idleness among the inmate population due to lack of programs and inmate work/jobs in the facility.
 - The staff and inmates concur that there is a significant lack of vocational education programs.
 - Program space is extremely limited in the facility.

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- Inmates seldom interact with supervisors as most issues are expected to be handled at the lowest level possible.
- Recommendations:
 - Consider developing a formal and structured inmate orientation program, supervised by staff. Inmate behavioral expectations and avenues to address issues could be formally explained and would be helpful to both the inmates and the staff. An 'inmate handbook' that covers the basics of living at the facility to include rules of conduct, disciplinary procedures, grievance procedures, medical/mental health access, PREA, access to programs and services, etc., may be very useful in giving the inmates consistent guidance. Other handouts and video presentations might be used to support the delivery of the program.
 - Space in the facility for programs and services is limited. A facility-wide review of the utilization of space and examination of the schedule in place may provide opportunities for increased access to programs.
 - Vocational and work training programs need to expand. Establishing a multi-disciplinary work group in the facility to explore all options to enhance productive inmate activities and reduce idleness would be beneficial.
 - Review current minimum required supervisory checks in each area to increase the amount of supervisory contact with front line staff and inmates. Consider implementation of a supervisory log or use of red ink in the existing log for recording each time supervisors make inspections of the area.

Staffing

- Strengths:
 - The staff of SCI are both experienced and professional.
 - The staff take pride in the operation of the facility and value teamwork and collaboration with each other.
 - Staff generally work the same position on a regular basis and are very familiar with the operation of their job assignment.
 - Staff endeavor to handle everything at the lowest level possible.
- Challenges:

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- Complacency is often the result of staff remaining in one assignment for long periods of time.
- Given the experience levels of staff at SCI they are resistant to change.
- Supervisors are often much less experienced than the staff that they supervise.
- Important information sometimes is not reported up the chain of command and is simply handled at the lowest level.
- Recommendations:
 - Consider implementation of staff assignment rotation program to avoid staff from remaining in one regular assignment and to cross train staff in multiple functions. This will strengthen the skills of the staff and help prevent complacency.
 - Involve staff from various ranks in change management projects such as work groups and policy review and development.
 - Through a combination of training and policy development, equip the supervisors with the skills and tools needed to effectively supervise the more experienced staff.
 - Establish clear expectations that all unusual incidents are reported up the chain of command even when corrective action has been taken at the lowest level.